

wouldn't be denied, how much he had missed Kay. That was all Betty knew and what she took for granted. She wasn't aware of any reason why Kay should leave anything or why she should think. Kay was returned by her friend. It seemed as clear that there was no reason to worry about herself and Jeremy, at least while Betty was talking. Betty was a kind of witness to great happiness and did it with her own security.

When Captain Lepp, still Jeremy's immediate superior officer, had intended him to go to an island port in Michigan to represent the Navy at a launching which was being a signal for speed and energy in shipbuilding, Kay had found herself welcoming the new assignment. It would be a change for Jeremy and herself, something new to see. And she told him, though he laughed at the idea, that she was sure a mutual special recognition of him.

"They've got to have some sucker out there in town," he said, "but that's all right. I'd like to see these people. Even what the reports say, they really are doing a job. I might not across some job that wouldn't be up my street after the war. How about coming along? It wouldn't cost so much. I think I can fix it so you'll see the ship."

"No. You don't want the tugging along."

SHE had been driven by her work at the Coast Guard lately. This chance of Jeremy's for a week would give her a chance to catch up on both office work and housekeeping, to achieve the peace and calmness that seemed just out of reach. It would be a kind of new beginning. She could do a better job in every way if she had time to catch her breath.

"It might not be a lot of fun for you."

"There are things I have to do now, work," she explained, "things I've been putting off."

"Maybe it will feel good to get rid of me for a while."

Kay knew she should pick that statement up and just let it back at him with a laugh, agree with it and prove it couldn't be true. But she didn't quite know how to make that last.

"It could work both ways," she said.

"It's kind of a mean thing to say with a laugh."

"I deliberately chose you, didn't I?"

"Yes," but you thought it would be different," he answered. They were sitting at the table finishing their evening coffee and he looked her with a quick ray of emotion and came over to kiss her. "We've had fun, just the same," he said again for her cheer.

That he let her go, disappointedly. "You never figured on having me hanging around like this all the time," he told her. "Don't be silly, Betty. I knew the way was going to end, didn't I, and that we'd live together every day, sooner or later. We're just beginning on a sort of regular life, sooner than a lot of people, you, I, that's in the way."

"I guess there are going to be some awful checks, what we've of them, but I take off the old pattern for good," said Jeremy.

"I don't mind."

"I'll tell you one thing. I'm not going back to that racket I was working for in Chicago. Even if I got to be a big shot in the town I would never go back. The family reached me in there. What I want when this war is over is to get into production. I want to know how things are made and to help make them. That's the way to feel solid, to know you're actually good for something. It was the way I used to feel when I was on the ship."

Kay said, to change that subject, "You'll probably be moving your family on this trip, won't you? You go through Chicago anyway."

"I can probably fix that up. I ought to do that."

Then, though she had brought it up and suggested it, she didn't want him to see his family. They didn't like her. At least they didn't like his getting married without telling them in advance, and she had a hunch they would be disappointed in the big, shabby old house, that the Wings were comfortably poor, common and kind to her because there was no one to sitting otherwise now that she was Jeremy's legal wife.

She imagined them, again her will, organizing Jeremy on this trip, and every since in her refusal to give him back to her not and not her husband. Kay remembered the reserve and dignity of Jeremy's father, the way he had looked at her as if wondering what trick she might have played on Jeremy, and as if she were a tramp. He knew better than that before she had left. He'd treated her like a wife, after that first inspection.

But Jeremy's mother hadn't forgiven her. There had been no scene, no reproaches of any sort, so far as Kay knew. Jeremy's mother had accepted the situation with the peace that a well-bred woman would always have when confronted with someone else's lack of taste. Her cool indignation about Kay's family, her omission of any desire to meet them, her questions about how long Kay and Jeremy had known each other, had made Kay feel shyly angry. She had a constant feeling during her stay with them that they had not really accepted Jeremy's marriage to her on part of the father of the family life. It was as if they thought she might disappear so suddenly as she had come into Jeremy's life and so the less said the better.

But Jeremy hadn't seen anything wrong in their omission by the old Wings. He thought his family had taken a very wise and was grateful that they had been so respectful or angry. How would they talk to Jeremy of the new and there, he himself now, wondered Kay? Could they hurt his love for her or make it uncertain or unshared?

Was it uncertain already? Was part of his discontent due not only to the frustration of not being in the command forces but to a sense of having let himself down in some part? Kay had driven that thought away more than once since the night when they had gone to Brenda's dinner party, and here it was now, burning against her head like an insect which she couldn't break off so vigorously that it wouldn't break again.

SHE put it off it once more now for the time being, and went back to the Coast Guard office to do a few more hours' work. She would try to reach Jeremy by telephone and get him to meet her at the Tavern before about half past five. She would tell him that she had brought her car and four new shirts.

But it was not Jeremy whom she called first. On the desk lay a memorandum, and a woman that she recognized as Wanda Ingram's office. She did that once. Wanda wouldn't have left his apartment without something she thought that most important. He must be leaving for his new assignment and want to say goodbye.

"Yes, I am, as a matter of fact," he said when she called him. "I'm going to Washington after tomorrow but I may be held up there for a month and then go home. It's quite definite and that I tell you I can tell you more about it. But I called you up about something else. I want to see you for about half an hour this afternoon, maybe if you're in."

"I don't see how I can. I'm sorry."

"It's important," he said. "I want you to meet someone who seems to know me. No kidding, Kay, this is someone you can't afford to pass up."

"What's it about?"

"I can't go into it on the telephone. How about half past four at the French Bar? Not for drinking. This fellow

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